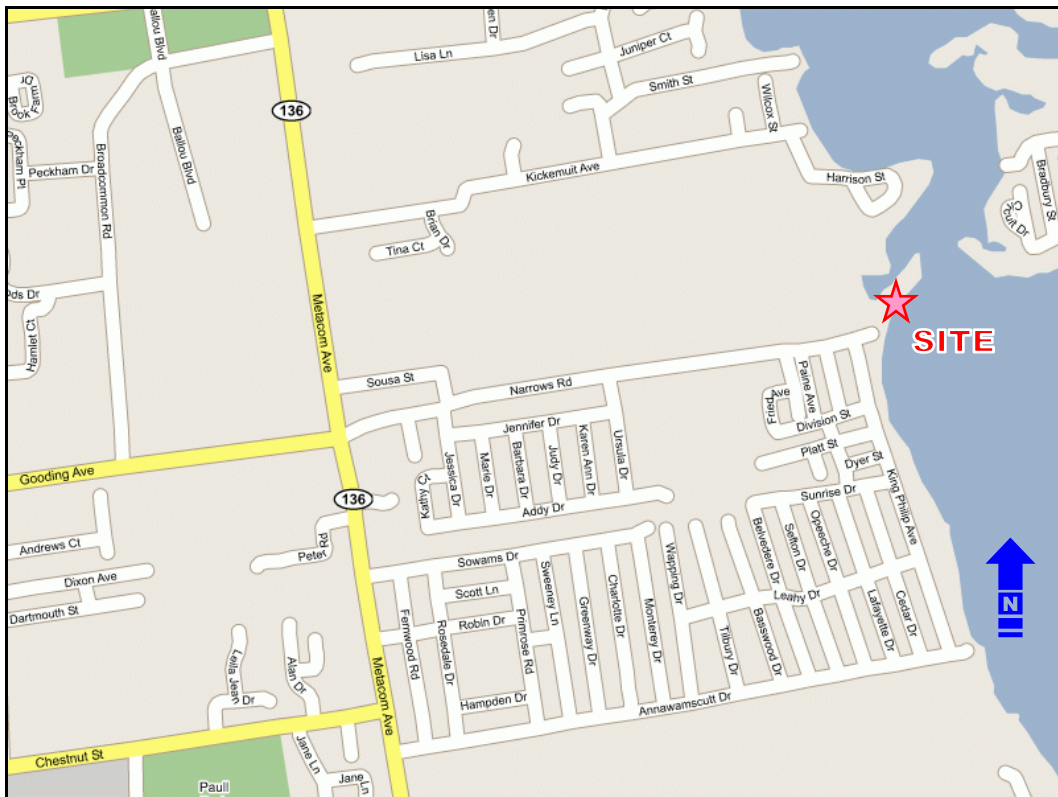


Site No. 6

BRISTOL NARROWS

Bristol
Narrows Road



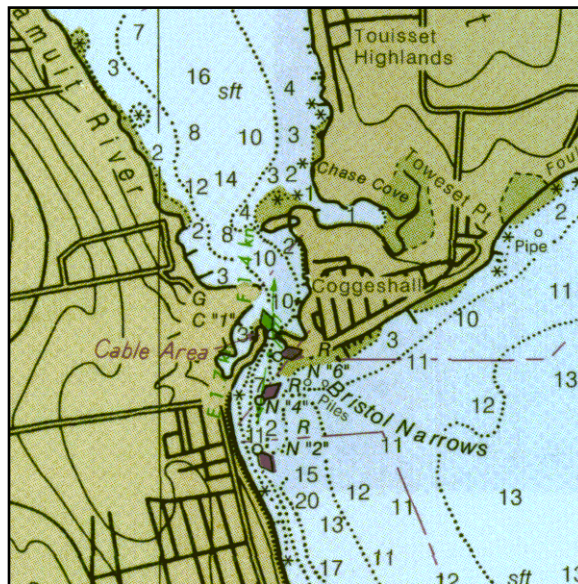
BRISTOL NARROWS

Site Description

The Bristol Narrows site is a small, town-owned public access right-of-way at the end of Narrows Road in Bristol. Located within Mount Hope Bay at the mouth of the Kickemuit River, the site is characterized by a long tidal flat / sand spit which is accessible by automobile. Both fishing and boat launching occur along the flat, though use of the site is limited to mostly local residents. Coastal wetlands and shellfish beds flank the site, and the landside area is mostly undeveloped. As several docks and mooring areas line the Kickemuit River, the channel at the Narrows is subjected to heavy navigational use during the boating season.

Location Assessment

Bay Location. The site is located at the northwest corner of Mount Hope Bay at the entrance to the Kickemuit River, directly across from Touisset Point in Warren. While waters in the vicinity of this site were not assessed for aquatic life support in the *State of the State's Waters Report*, causes for water quality impairment include the presence of viral and bacterial pathogens. Due to pathogens, waters in the vicinity are conditionally closed to shellfishing following heavy rains. These waters have been designated a water quality goal of SA (high quality) by the RIDEM (see Appendix B). As reported in the Online Recreational Fishing Survey, commonly caught species in the Mount Hope Bay region consist of Striped Bass, Bluefish, and Tautog (spring - fall). Anglers were observed fishing for Bluefish and Skipjacks at the time of site visit (mid-August).



Water uses in the area consist primarily of recreational boating, as shorelines of the lower Kickemuit River are lined with residential docks and mooring areas. The tidal flat within the site is also commonly used by local residents as a natural boat launch, and kayaking was observed within the river. As the gateway from harbor uses in the Kickemuit River to the open waters of Mount Hope Bay, boating traffic through the Narrows can be heavy during periods of peak use, particularly during summer months when the weather is conducive to recreational boating and sailing. The shoreline near the site entrance is also lightly used for beach and swimming purposes.

Land Location. The Bristol Narrows site is located at the end of Narrows Road, approximately 1 mile east of its intersection with Gooding Avenue and Metacom Avenue (State Route 136). Land uses along this local collector are almost exclusively residential. At the time of site visit, several children of nearby neighborhoods were observed playing and riding bicycles within the site.

Route 136 is an arterial roadway through Bristol, Warren, and Swansea, Massachusetts which supports a mix of residential, commercial, and light industrial uses of varying density. While expanding to 4 lanes along certain stretches, the 2-lane section of highway in the vicinity of the

site is subjected to moderate congestion during peak periods. The RIDOT is currently in the final stages of completing an intersection improvements project at the Gooding / Metacom / Narrows intersection, which includes the addition of turning lanes, wheelchair ramps, and other improvements. The site is approximately a 20-minute drive from the nearest interstate facility (I-195).

Environmental Constraints and Permitting. Bristol Narrows consists of an upland sand spit and salt marsh is surrounded by fairly shallow waters. Some exposed shellfish beds were observed at low tide (see Photos 5, 7), however there is no eelgrass is documented in this area. Directly at the end of Narrows Road there is a public right-of-way leading out to a concrete pad. The coastal feature is the sand spit, the salt marsh and the top of the concrete pad. Waters in the area are classified by the CRMC as Type 2 (Low-Intensity Use) coastal waters.

Facilities Assessment

The public right-of-way at the end of Narrows Road currently functions as an unimproved shoreline access area (see Photos 2, 3, 4). Aside from a single trash receptacle, the site offers virtually no amenities, fishing-related or otherwise. The site was observed to be relatively free of litter, and one frequent visitor noted that upkeep of the site has been adopted by nearby residents. The wooded area directly west of the site is also host to a feral cat population.

Fishing at the site is concentrated along the tidal sand spit, which offers the best access to the relatively deeper waters at the Narrows center channel. Given the narrow width of this channel (particularly at low tide), the potential exists for use conflicts between recreational boating and fishing at this location (see Photo 6). While no such conflicts were observed, anglers fishing at the site noted that they must exercise caution when casting towards the navigation channel.

Anglers at the time of visit were all local residents (Bristol, Warren), stating the site's close location and easy access as the primary reasons for fishing at the site. Parking within the site is undefined; visitors were observed to park along the tree line near the entrance (see Photo 3) or on the tidal flat itself (Photos 2, 6). Though the site does not currently offer any handicap accessibility features, the ability to park directly at the fishing spot is generally conducive to handicap usability of this natural feature.

Existing Site Conditions

	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
<i>Existing Fishing Facilities</i>		X		
<i>Parking</i>		X		
<i>Compatibility with Surrounding Land / Water Uses</i>		X		
<i>Statewide Transportation Accessibility / Public Transit</i>		X		
<i>Site Aesthetics</i>		X		
	Low	Medium	High	
<i>Water Quality (see Appendix B)</i>		X		

Priority for Capital Improvements: **Low**

Bristol Narrows currently functions well a small, unimproved public fishing, boat launch, and general shoreline right-of-way, serving the recreational needs of a primarily local user base. The feasibility of improvements to the site is generally limited by the small size of the landside parcel, environmental features, and surrounding land and water uses. The site would ostensibly benefit from the development of a small fixed pier or floating dock to further separate recreational fishing from boating uses within the Narrows channel while still providing quality fishing access. This would direct such development to be considered at the southerly shoreline of the site near the right-of-way entrance, however the close proximity of abutting private residences (see Photos 1, 4) make development of a public fishing access structure at this location undesirable. The observed presence of shellfish beds along the Narrows further hinders the viability of development within these waters. While parking within the landside area could be improved through better definition and landscaping, these improvements would not appreciably enhance the recreational fishing experience at the site to justify the investment required for such work.

Though lacking in aesthetics and facilities, Bristol Narrows is adequately serving its purpose as a local shoreline recreational facility. It is therefore believed that capital investment at this site is of a lesser priority, and that the public fishing access needs of the State would be better served through improvements at another location or locations along the Narragansett Bay shoreline.



Photo 1. Entrance to site at end of Narrows Road looking northeast.
The public right-of-way is marked by the monument on the left.



Photo 2. Looking north into the site from the entrance at Narrows Road.
Cars can be seen parked on the tidal flat for fishing and boat launching.



Photo 3. Looking northeast to tidal flat.



Photo 4. Looking back to site entrance from tidal flat.



Photo 5. Looking north up the Kickemuit River. Flats exposed at low tide reveal the presence of shellfish beds in the area.



Photo 6. Recreational fishing from the tidal flat at the Narrows. Fishing and boating uses are in close proximity at this location.



Photo 7. Looking southeast to Mount Hope Bay from the tidal flat.



Photo 8. Salt marsh west of the tidal flat.